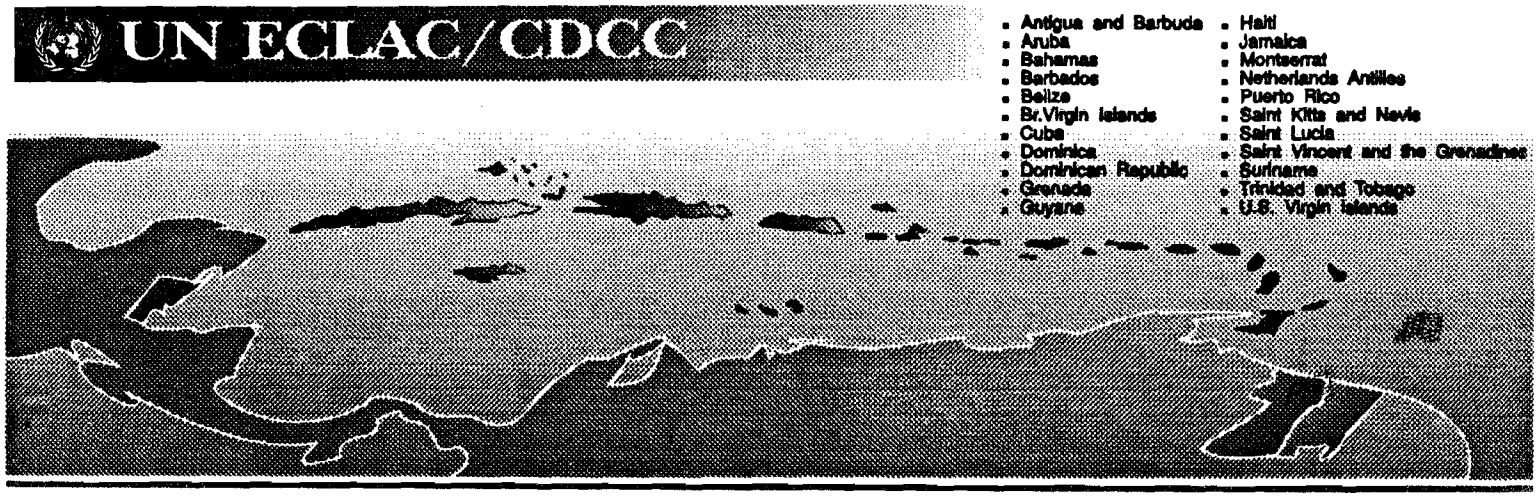

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PORT-OF-SPAIN DECLARATION ON POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE

PORT OF SPAIN DECLARATION[1]
ON
POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Following the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on Population and Development, held at Mexico City from 29 April to 4 May 1993, and the adoption by it of the Latin American and Caribbean Consensus on Population and Development, representatives of the countries and territories of the Caribbean, convened in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 2 and 3 December 1993, to identify key population and development issues of concern to the subregion. In addition, the following policy position on issues of population and sustainable development was formulated and approved as the Caribbean contribution to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development. In so doing, the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States Virgin Islands, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), the Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies, (WAND), the Family Planning Associations (FPAs), (Belize, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago), and Women's Centre Foundation, (Jamaica), acknowledged the importance of a Caribbean regional perspective to their individual and collective preparatory phases, for participation in, at and following the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

PREAMBLE

We, the Representatives at this meeting on Population and Sustainable Development:

Reviewing the progress made by Governments of the Caribbean subregion in implementing the recommendations and achieving the goals of the World Population Plan of Action;

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1 Prepared at the ECLAC/UNFPA Caribbean Meeting of Experts for a Regional Plan of Action on Population and Sustainable Development, Port-of-Spain, 2-3 December 1993. This document has been prepared by representatives of 19 countries and territories as part of the Caribbean subregion's intergovernmental preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Sustainable Development.

Acknowledging the Latin American and Caribbean Consensus, and the decision to formulate a regional Plan of Action on Population and Development;

Addressing ourselves to the issues raised and deliberated upon at the Caribbean Working Group Meeting in July 1993 for a Caribbean Plan of Action on Population and Development;

Emphasizing the uniqueness of the Caribbean subregion as reflected in the population and development-related special characteristics and needs of Caribbean small islands and coastal countries, which require special attention and treatment and as illustrated within the following major areas:

- Our vulnerability to natural disasters;
- The unique challenges we face as a consequence of our history and geography, including widespread dispersal across the Caribbean sea;
- The consequences of sudden changes in external economic forces on our fragile economies;
- The unique impact of international migration that affects the critical mass;
- The relationship of the demographic situation to the carrying capacity of the countries;
- The archipelagic island structure of some of the countries which pose problems of communications, special services, environmental degradation and fragile ecosystems.

Recognizing that small islands and low-lying coastal States present a special case for population, environment and development integration - being ecologically fragile, vulnerable and possessing unique demographic characteristics;

Acknowledging that certain measures have been put in place to counteract some of these problems, including:

a) development of national and regional disaster response agencies;
b) diversification of the economies;
c) expansion of intraregional trade;
d) greater utilization of locally produced goods;
e) greater regional cooperation and coordination; and
f) adoption of population policies.

Recognizing the increasing geopolitical and strategic marginalization of the Caribbean subregion;

Recognizing that there is a tendency for donors to view the improved demographic situation and relatively high GNP of the SUBregion as an indication that basic quality of life conditions are met and that, therefore, there is less need for continuing support.

Acknowledging the efforts being made by countries and territories of the Caribbean subregion to promote social and economic development, and the commitment shown in the formulation and implementation of population and development policies and programmes.

Identifying the following key population and sustainable development issues:

- Sustained economic growth, bearing in mind the consequences of external economic forces;
- Integrated national development plans and policies that take into account demographic, social and cultural factors and vulnerability to natural disasters;
- Changing patterns of production, consumption and trade and their implications for development and environmental sustainability;
- External assistance that supports national development;
- Provision of and improvements in the delivery of adequate social services, infrastructure support and jobs to meet the needs of a growing population;
- Conservation and management of resources, including waste disposal;
- Population, environment and carrying capacity linkages;
- Investment in human resources;
- Linkages between the enhancement of the roles and status of women, family planning programmes and population dynamics;
- Social equity strategies;
- Integrated population policies and programmes;
- Poverty reduction and alleviation;
- Substance abuse;

- Improved research, analysis and information on population and development issues to promote better understanding of population structure, the processes of population change, their related trends and their interrelations to the development processes.

Further recognizing the invaluable contributions of donor countries, international agencies and non-governmental organizations to the provision of technical and financial assistance for population programmes in the Caribbean subregion,

Mindful that, despite the diversities and differences in our demographic, social, economic and political conditions as well as our cultural and religious values, the countries and territories of the Caribbean share certain common concerns in regard to population and development,

Reaffirming the need for closer cooperation and collaboration among the countries and territories of the Caribbean subregion, as well as regional, international, and non-governmental organization cooperation with governments in their efforts to address and solve the problems of absolute or relative poverty where it exists, health and nutrition, population and the environment and to accelerate the social and economic well-being of their people,

Adopt the Port-of-Spain Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development as our statement of commitment towards addressing the issues of population and sustainable development, and as a subregional contribution to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Sustainable Development and its preparations.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles are considered to be appropriate in the Caribbean subregion, in terms of population and sustainable development:

(a) Sustainable development, conservation and preservation of the environment are essential for human beings to enjoy a productive and healthy life.

(b) The right to development entails meeting the needs of present generations in a sustainable manner without compromising the needs of future generations.

(c) Population and development issues and problems differ from country to country and solutions to these must depend on and be found within the context of the specific social, cultural, economic, and environmental priorities and needs of each country and territory.

(d) The process of the formulation and implementation of population and development programmes, policies and development plans are the absolute right and responsibility of each country and territory. To promote a higher quality of life for all people, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption should be substantially reduced through appropriate policies. External technical and financial assistance will be required to complement such efforts.

(e) Access to safe and effective family planning services is a basic human right. Informed choice and access to a range of affordable family planning methods and services must be assured for all.

(f) Population and sustainable development programmes, to be effective and successful, must be sensitive to local values, involve male and female decision makers at all levels, and ensure the full participation of NGOs, the private sector, grass roots organizations (GROs), and individuals.

(g) Population and sustainable development programmes, to be successful, need to fully respect and protect the rights of individuals, seek the protection of vulnerable groups, and, accordingly, should ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, social class and religion.

(h) Efforts to address development and population-related problems are the primary responsibility of each country and territory; external technical and financial assistance will be required to complement such efforts;

(i) Population and development issues and problems are interrelated; there is a need to integrate population issues into mainstream social and economic development planning systems.

THE CARIBBEAN CONTEXT

The Caribbean subregion is characterized by small islands and low-lying coastal States dispersed over vast areas of the Caribbean Sea.

The essential characteristics of Caribbean economies that make them very susceptible to external shocks are the fact that they are small, open, dependent and undiversified economies.

In addition to their characteristics of extreme openness and proneness to natural disasters, these economies exhibit a heavy dependence on service-oriented industries and a high level of food imports which together add up to extreme vulnerability.

Given the small size of the countries and the limited resource base, the adequacy of the population to generate self-sustaining growth comes into question.

Another consequence is the lack of a critical mass which economies require to make the necessary effort to break into international markets.

In addition to population size, other factors that interrelate with the development process and have implications for the investment and public expenditures are the age-sex structure and distribution of the population as well as the pattern of its migration movement.

The consequences of the complex interrelations between population, development, social and cultural factors and the environment have resulted in emigration, deterioration of the environment, unemployment, lack of educational and training opportunities, inadequate health facilities and services, the erosion of the family structure, teenage pregnancy and the increasing incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

To effectively manage the complex relationship between population, development and the environment in the Caribbean, particular attention needs to be focused on employment generation, access to human resource development, poverty reduction and alleviation programmes, land use, social equity and reproductive rights and responsibilities. It is also necessary to take into account the many strengths which our societies and culture bring to population and sustainable development challenges. In addressing these issues, the active cooperation and participation of all sectors of our communities will be crucial.

THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POPULATION, SUSTAINED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development

We recognize that at both the national and regional levels, population issues must be integrated into the formulation and implementation of all policies and programmes relating to economic and social development and the environment. This is guided by our belief that introducing population policies in an integrated way into development strategies will speed the pace of sustainable development. To the extent that population processes are influenced by development processes, such integration also will hasten achievement of population objective.

To that end, we encourage governments to strengthen existing institutional mechanisms; and consider the establishment or identification of a ministry and population unit responsible for population and related planning. In addition, a planning advisory body, such as a population council, is considered appropriate and effective to play an advocacy role and facilitate the establishment of a macroeconomic-demographic planning framework.

In this regard, mindful of the need to meet the requirements of the new planning and policy environment, we accordingly stress the need for adoption of new ways of incorporating population issues in short and medium-term plans and strategy formulation, while not foregoing a long-term perspective:

- Short-term strategies should primarily respond to critical macro-economic concerns, along with issues relating to population composition and change; and,

- Medium and long-term perspectives should increasingly address broader issues embracing the inter-relationships between demographic, socio-economic and environmental factors.

We also recognize that such efforts depend for their success on continued political commitment. We acknowledge that the essential components in the process of formulating public policy are those activities which generate, maintain and refine political commitment to address population issues. Such political commitment grows out of an awareness of and appreciation for population-development interactions. We, therefore, encourage policy analysts to strengthen the "knowledge base" feeding into decision-making in all sectors.

We note that most Caribbean countries are experiencing severe obstacles to achieving sustainable economic development. For the Caribbean, in particular, with its large tourism and agricultural-based and service-oriented economies, this is of particular concern. These obstacles are reflected in the persistence of trade imbalances, the increasing burden of structural adjustment programmes and debt-servicing, the shrinking of the world economy, increased poverty and low productivity.

We recognize the need to plan action which will lead to the development of balanced and sustainable economic growth by reducing trade barriers, investment programmes leading to sustainable job-creation projects, relief to debt-service burden, alleviation of poverty.

We acknowledge that the critical challenge for the countries and territories in the subregion is to improve the quality of life for the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This cannot be addressed without recognizing the strong linkages between population, resources, the environment and development.

We reaffirm the need for formulation of long-term policies and programmes that simultaneously address population growth, alleviate poverty and reduce social inequality in both rural and urban settings. We emphasize the importance of ensuring that policies and programmes are responsive to the needs of the poor in all countries, particularly in health, education, training and family planning and maternal and child health programmes.

Population, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation

Widespread poverty is a major challenge to development efforts as poverty is often accompanied by ignorance, illiteracy, low status of women and limited access to health and family-planning services - all these factors tending to result in high levels of fertility, morbidity and mortality. Families headed by women often experience higher levels of poverty. We acknowledge that alleviating the conditions of abject poverty is an integral part of the agenda for sustainable development.

We agree that it is also necessary to prepare for meeting the basic needs of the population that will inevitably be added in the near future.

We reaffirm the need to break the poverty-population growth cycle through integrated population and development policies and programmes that recognize the key role of human resources in national development, and give strong emphasis in national planning and policy-making to the development of human resources.

We, accordingly, would encourage that action be taken to make equity in the allocation of resources and access to services an important element of national policy, designing policies and strategies to ensure that the benefits of development are widely shared.

We recognize that the alleviation of poverty, the achievement of equitable social and economic relations, and the provision of basic infrastructure and social welfare services constitute key components of socio-economic development and central factors for harmonizing demographic trends with sustainable development. There is, therefore, need to give high priority to investments and expenditures to facilitate access to education, training, as well as to economic policies that increase their opportunity to participate in the labour force; particular attention should be given to the situation of poor women.

Population and the environment

Environmental change brought about by increased populations, technological change and economic activities have direct consequences on the quality of life for people, including their culture and traditions.

In the case of the Caribbean small islands, countries and coastal States, the relationship between population and environment cannot be viewed in a simplistic fashion solely in terms of absolute numbers but, more importantly, should be considered in terms of the relationship of the demographic situation to the carrying capacity of the countries, their ability to organize themselves and mobilize their resources to confront their problems as well as the resultant manifestations. This is further reinforced in the case of the archipelagic island countries where the additional problems of communications, provision of special services, environmental degradation and fragile ecosystems must be addressed.

Another unique characteristic of the Caribbean countries and territories concerns the issue of productivity in relation to limited land space, the topography of the islands and the resulting mechanization problems. Where land holdings are small and topography rugged, the use of modern mechanization methods becomes difficult, resulting in low productivity and uncompetitive agricultural production.

Recalling the Caribbean's continuing concerns about a wide range of environmental issues, including the ocean-dumping of radioactive and toxic materials and wastes, we support the implementation of policies that will minimize severe ecological damage and its health and welfare repercussions. This requires:

- better knowledge of the relationships between population, culture and environment in the subregion;

- support to develop the institutional capacity in the subregion to conduct the necessary research and policy analysis;

- administrative systems which recognize and assist intersectoral planning;

- the inclusion of projected demographic trends and imputed consumption patterns in planning;

- political commitment to be given to policies that will focus on the quality of life of the population, rationalize population distribution, alleviate poverty, reduce environmentally-dangerous production and consumption, and foster the use of appropriate technologies.

Exposure to adverse environmental conditions caused by chemical, physical or biological agents may affect human fertility and reproductive health. The importation and the industrial and domestic use of toxic chemicals and pesticides are not adequately monitored by Caribbean countries which lack the appropriate technology. We therefore consider it important that governments put in place the appropriate technology and regulatory mechanisms.

We recognize that changes to the global climate would be of fundamental importance to the peoples, countries and territories of the Caribbean islands and low-lying coastal States. The causes of such changes have their origins far from our subregion and are beyond the control of our countries and territories. We reiterate, however, our major concern that the repercussions of global climate change and resultant sea-level rise will involve, at an early stage, serious economic and social consequences not only for the small low-lying islands of the subregion but also for the coastal States of the Caribbean.

We call on the international community to give full recognition to these vital concerns including the possibility of their total inundation and to take the necessary actions and to commit itself to the alleviation of possible economic and social impacts of sea-level rise in our subregion.

We note that the present high vulnerability of Caribbean populations to natural disasters is likely to further increase as a consequence of climate and technological change and recommend that:

- governments promote better management and prediction of the current hazards and evaluate development projects for their impact on the environment and their susceptibility to natural hazards; and

- commitment be given to developing disaster preparedness measures, including better land use regulation and community preparedness arrangements.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Gender equality as a basic human right is recognized by member States through their endorsement of the international instruments and declarations including The Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Nevertheless, gender discrimination continues against women and girls. We affirm that achieving genuine gender equity and equality is both a fundamental prerequisite to achieving the universality of human rights and social justice as well as the achievement of economic and environmental sustainability. We recognize:

- the central position and the role which women should take in the Caribbean national and subregional development process;

- women's significant traditional roles in the Caribbean as household providers and decision makers in reproduction and in the maintenance of the human resource - independently, with spouses/partners or other family members;

- the fundamental link between women's autonomy, gender equality and the achievement of sustainable development;

- that women remain at the greatest disadvantage in critical areas of unemployment, poverty and inequality of income, despite recognition by planners of these as major critical areas for regional development;

- the acknowledgement of women's concern in development planning. However, there remains a need to accelerate the incorporation of women's

concerns into all sector analyses and plans and to encourage all member States to ratify the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

We recognize that women's empowerment is legitimate and critically important in its own right. However, we note that, in the subregion, the need for empowerment of women is based on the historical imbalance of power between women and men. This imbalance continues to be reflected in the status of our women, particularly in respect of education, health and economic autonomy. This significantly affects and is affected by fertility, maternal, infant and child mortality and morbidity. From this standpoint, we note with concern;

- the continued scarcity of women in the corridors of national and subregional decision-making;

- women's inability to effect decision-making in their interpersonal and sexual lives, and in issues related to production.

We also note and affirm societal support for the joint roles and responsibilities of men and women in reproduction and production. In this regard, we consider the preponderance of power which men continue to wield in personal relationships, in the household as well as in national and international decision-making, of major significance to the erosion of this joint responsibility and to the increasing vulnerability of women and children in our subregion. We also note with deep concern, the increasing rates of domestic violence against our women and children and affirm that the present socialization of our young males, supported by intrusive media influences, and the use and participation in illicit activities related to illegal drugs, does not contribute towards healthy future relationships between men and women.

To this end we encourage and support the adoption of the following strategies:

- Population policies and programmes must be gender-sensitive. They must involve measures to empower women, eliminate gender bias, ensure that women are fully integrated into the development process as equal partners in policy-making, planning and programme implementation and be focused on ensuring their access to education and employment;

- Population issues cannot be separated from the issue of improving the social, economic, political and legal status of women in the Caribbean;

- Encouragement in the development of an adequate infrastructure to gain equitable access to credit and foreign exchange in order to achieve economic autonomy;

- That for sustainable development to occur there must be genuine gender equality and equal access to participation in all development activities by women and girls, particularly in education and training, employment and health care;

- Adequate support for NGOs and autonomous women's organizations working towards the empowerment of women through the transformation of gender relations;

- Commitment be given to the strengthening of national machinery and administrative mechanisms in gender sensitive planning, capabilities for research and the implementation of programmes. This requires closer collaboration with research and teaching institutions involved in gender issues. Greater efforts to equip technocrats and senior policy makers and planners with the skills and knowledge of gender analysis and related areas should also be encouraged.

We note the increasing vulnerability of poor women in the subregion as a result of macroeconomic policies, especially structural adjustment policies in some countries. We urge that urgent action be taken to assess and address their impact on the lives of these women, through the empowerment process.

THE FAMILY, ITS ROLES, COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

We recognize that, despite the many diverse family forms that exist within the Caribbean, they have the potential to achieve the socializing functions which were traditionally appropriated to the nuclear family only. These family forms reflect an adaptation to the dynamics operating within the social, economic, political and cultural systems. We also acknowledge that the patterns of family formation are undergoing considerable change.

While we note that policies and programmes in the subregion are being put into place, we consider that there is continued need for review, in light of gender equality and the rights of children. In recognition of the large numbers of households headed by women, we urge the provision of means (i.e., social services, part-time jobs, child care services, flexible schedules) to facilitate compatibility between economic activity and parental roles.

We reaffirm that the family, as the basic unit of society, is entitled to receive protection by society and the State. We therefore particularly stress the need to be aware of the family impact of externally-imposed economic conditions such as structural adjustment programmes which impact negatively on employment opportunities for men thereby threatening the traditional gender-based division of productive and reproductive roles of men and women.

We also recognize that structural adjustment places increased demands on women's already overstretched time. Women's time has become a crucial variable of adjustment. With respect to outside employment, work pressures have reduced the time women can devote to children with the consequence of reduced standards of care and, in extreme cases, the abandonment of children altogether. We note that this situation also places an extra burden on the adolescent, typically the female, on whom the domestic responsibilities are shifted.

We also recognize that structural adjustment measures, combined with reduced employment opportunities and wage restraint, has resulted in a greater influx of people, especially women and children, into the vulnerable groups for whom poverty alleviation programmes have to be devised. We accordingly stress the urgent need for attention to be given to these issues in light of the predominance of female-headed households and the implications for family nurturance.

We agree that the mother remains the prime socializing agent. However, under the impact of adjustment policies, she often assumes the additional role of provider. In this context the family health, including nutritional well-being, is jeopardized. The strength for survival of families has led to increased tensions as evidenced in the rise in domestic violence and child abuse.

We recognize the existence and needs of particular vulnerable families - the single-parent families, poor families with disabled and/or elderly members, families separated through migration and by the working arrangements of their members, rural families, and families affected by HIV and AIDS, or by disintegration through domestic violence, child abuse or neglect.

We support the need for the formulation of family sensitive policies providing support particularly to vulnerable families and the establishment of guidelines for monitoring and the implementation of family policies and programmes.

POPULATION GROWTH AND STRUCTURE

Diversity of fertility, mortality and population growth rates

Highly characteristic is the wide spread of population sizes within the Caribbean subregion, ranging in 1991 from over 10 million for Cuba to under 11,000 in Montserrat, a more than 1,000 to 1 ratio.

Similar divergences exist among the rates of population change in the subregion which vary between negative and positive growth - 0.2 per cent per annum (Grenada), to +4.2 per cent (British Virgin Islands).

Generally, the overall level of mortality is declining, and Caribbean countries have reached an average longevity of 69.0 years in 1985-1990.

While fertility levels are declining, adolescent fertility is still considered to be unacceptably high. On average, it could be said that the majority of countries are in the middle to late stage of their demographic transition, demonstrating moderately low fertility and moderate to low mortality.

There is, however, a wide variety in the extent, pace and timing of onset in the demographic transition of the different countries. Some countries have already completed the transition (Barbados and Montserrat); others, such as Saint Lucia and Grenada, have started on the third stage of decline, but still need to make much headway. Others, such as Haiti and Belize, are still in the initial stages of their demographic transition.

The population history of the Caribbean has been dominated by a succession of immigration and emigration phases which have exerted an extremely influential force in the determination of demographic, economic, and social transitions throughout the countries of the subregion.

The extent to which these movements have impacted on the demographic growth of the subregion is clearly illustrated in the contradictory nature of the demographic picture, as indicated in the combination of low population growth rates with persistently high natural increases. This can obviously be traced to the high emigration levels which counter-balance natural increase. Countries have experienced losses that amount to between 50 to 100 per cent of their natural increases.

Likewise, the wide differences in population growth among countries can be explained largely in terms of different migration patterns. Some countries have also experienced substantial population growth as a result of inward migration.

Children, youth and the aged

Within the context of population and sustainable development, the rapidly increasing numbers at adolescence and working ages are a major challenge. For at least the next few decades, this feature of population structure will give rise to heavy demands on the labour market and on all social services, diverting scarce financial resources from capital investment to current expenditure. While Caribbean countries are proportionately "young" by international standards, older age groups within all Caribbean countries are growing rapidly. We recognize that these trends will have long-term implications which we must commit ourselves to addressing now. Innovative and effective macroeconomic strategies will therefore have to be introduced to create new jobs for the expanding labour force, especially as unemployment, and related problems, such as crime and poverty, will place heavy demands on public sector services.

We must be particularly aware of the needs of those in older age groups and urge that long-term socio-economic planning address these issues immediately.

In recognition of these and other challenges associated with population growth and structure, we acknowledge the particular needs and requirements of such exposed and vulnerable groups as children, youth, the aged, and the disabled. We recognize that especially during periods of economic austerity, our governments and administrations will need to protect children's well-being by continued adequate support for essential health and educational services.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANING

Reproductive health

Reproductive health is not merely the absence of disease or disorders of the reproductive process. It also implies that men and women equally have the ability and choice to reproduce responsibly, to regulate their fertility and to practice and enjoy sexual relationships regardless of race, sexual orientation or gender.

In the Caribbean, the concept advances the basic human right of all women and men to make free and informed choices regarding their own sexual and reproductive health and advocate for the means to exercise this right.

The attainment of optimal reproductive health eludes many of these persons owing to inadequate knowledge of human sexuality, inappropriate sexual behaviour, gender bias and inadequate information and services in regard to maternal and child health, STDs and the risk of cervical cancer, to name a few.

Unsafe abortion is also one of the most neglected underlying causes of reproductive ill health in the Caribbean and constitutes a major unrecognized social health issue. Women, adolescents and disadvantaged population groups are particularly vulnerable to all aspects of reproductive ill health and satisfactory outcomes cannot be achieved without the full involvement of both men and women.

Sexual health is central to people's lives but many persons fail to achieve it because relevant information and means including those related to family planning may not be available to them. The result can be unnecessarily high levels of abortions.

This problem must be addressed by promoting sexual health and family planning programmes for the following purposes:

- To ensure the provision of appropriate information and accessible reproductive health services that are free of coercion, affordable, acceptable and promote informed choices;

- To ensure that women's equality and right to family planning sexual and reproductive health remain a priority in national and international development policies;

- To provide services which respond to the changing reproductive and sexual health needs of Caribbean women and men throughout the life cycle and reflect the social, cultural, economic and demographic diversity of the subregion;

- To ensure the provision of appropriate information and services in order to prevent unsafe abortions and to ensure high quality standards for abortion-related services for individuals and couples.

We therefore reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that reproductive health services at primary health care levels for men and women of all ages contain a client-centred cultural approach. These should also be cost-effective, follow high standards of quality and include maternal child health care and family planning.

We also acknowledge that the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and referral of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection and AIDS, screening for cervical cancer and education and information on sexuality and responsible parenthood are essential. The early diagnosis and treatment of STDs will also significantly reduce the incidence of infertility. Full involvement of women in the formulation and implementation of reproductive health programmes and the establishment of the link between structural adjustment policies and women's health, as well as between migration and the special reproductive needs of migrant women in the Caribbean is recommended. A review of the legal and regulatory barriers to reproductive health services, the illegality of abortions, maternity leave regulations, the provision of facilities for breast-feeding mothers, and access to reproductive health services are also recommended for the Caribbean.

Family planning

Over the past three decades the availability of acceptable safer methods of modern contraception mainly through donor funding has permitted greater individual freedom and control of reproduction for men and women in the Caribbean. Despite the integration of family planning with primary health-care services in some countries, there still remains an unmet need for family planning based on fears regarding the health risks involved and lack

of adequate information for both service providers and clients. Widespread use of family planning saves the lives of women and children and are a cost-effective intervention because of their many direct and indirect benefits for individuals, couples, communities and governments. Cost benefit studies have shown that the gains in health and education through family planning can be reduced as a result of structural adjustment programmes and reduction of government support coupled with reductions in donor funding. Family planning programmes in the Caribbean need to benefit from partnerships between the clients to be served - and public, non-governmental and private sectors.

We accordingly stress the urgent need for:

- provision of easily accessible and available high quality family planning counselling and services;
- improvement of human resource planning selection and training of staff, counsellors, volunteers, parent educators and motivators;
- partnership between government, non-government and private organizations in the formulation and implementation of family planning services;
- involvement of the community and the participation of political, traditional religious leaders and social groups in the planning process;
- integration with other components of primary health care e.g. maternal and child health (MCH), sickle cell programmes, STD programmes, health promotion, expanded programme of immunization, women's health;
- positive commitment by governments to sustain family planning programmes, and seek donor support;
- regular review, assessment and evaluation of progress and identification of unmet needs;
- conduct of contraceptive prevalence surveys on a regular basis;
- increased male involvement in, and recognition and acceptance of the reproductive rights and responsibilities of men;
- wider reference in cultural approach to adolescent fertility and the need for programmes to target adolescents e.g. sex education in schools;
- promotion of family planning as a tool for national development;

- ensuring efficient continuous supply of commodities, strengthening of logistics system;

- removal of inappropriate legal, medical and regulatory barriers to access to family planning while continuing to ensure safety.

Adolescents

Motherhood at a young age entails a risk of maternal death and morbidity much greater than the average, and the children of young mothers also fare less well. In many countries, sexually active adolescents of both sexes are increasingly at high risk of contracting and transmitting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection, and they are often poorly informed about how to protect themselves. In some societies, adolescents are facing increasing pressures to engage prematurely in sexual activity. Young women, particularly poor teenage girls, are especially vulnerable because of their subordinate social position. Too many teenage girls seek abortions every year, which attests to the critical importance of the issue of unwanted pregnancy. Overall, for young women, early marriage and early motherhood severely curtail educational and employment opportunities and may impede their full physical and psycho-social development. Programmes addressing these issues have shown to be more effective when they secure the full involvement of adolescents in identifying and searching for solutions to their reproductive and sexual health needs, including support to those who wish to abstain from sexual activity.

We acknowledge the need to address adolescent reproductive health issues, including HIV infection and AIDS, through the promotion of responsible and healthy reproductive and sexual behaviour; to protect the human rights and well-being of adolescents, including the rights of the adolescent who becomes pregnant, to the continuation of her education, both during and after the pregnancy; and to promote their active involvement in the process of socio-economic development.

In recognition of the special needs of adolescents, both male and female, and the programmes required to meet those needs, including education programmes in the areas of family planning, family life, reproductive and sexual health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection and AIDS and reproductive health services, including family-planning services, we would encourage the adoption of the following strategies and programmes, specially designed to meet the needs of adolescents:

1. Family life education must include age appropriate and realistic sex education components, introduced at the primary level of education and taught by trained personnel.

2. Strategies must be developed for the empowerment of adolescents to use the information gained in the educational programmes, and to act in their own best interest.

3. Programmes for pregnant adolescents must include the young fathers, where applicable, as well as the young mothers.

4. Prevention of sexual abuse of children would seem in this context to be fundamental to the development of healthy sexual and reproductive life among adolescents. In many Caribbean countries it has been shown that the early start to sexual activity is often the direct result of childhood sexual abuse.

5. Empowerment of adolescent women to manage their sexuality is particularly important.

Mindful also of the observed linkages between adolescent fertility and other socio-economic factors, such as low educational status, unemployment poverty and social inequality, we would encourage the adoption of an integrated approach to resolving the problems of adolescent fertility.

We note that despite the substantial attention given to the subject of teenage pregnancy over the past decade, the full nature of the relationships between the determinants, their socio-economic environment, family and household structures are still less completely understood than for other areas. Even less known or documented is the impact of the consequences on the life chances of the teenager.

We therefore would encourage the conduct of studies to address the problems of teenage fertility through a broader framework that would incorporate the major socio-economic and psychological problems faced by the teenage population in the context of today's changing society.

We would also recommend that, in addition to the current preventive programmes being implemented, action be taken to devise strategies and programmes to address the consequences of adolescent fertility and to assist teenage mothers in re-entering the school system as well as employment. We would encourage that this package of programmes should include projects to help teenage mothers stay in school and complete their education; nutrition programmes; special vocational programmes to assist them to find jobs that will enable them to support their new family; child-care support to help make it possible for them to work without jeopardizing their children's welfare.

We acknowledge that, as a result of continuing biomedical and related research, more and more people at present have access to modern methods of fertility regulation. This has led to improved reproductive health and reduced fertility. However, a substantial degree of effort across a wide range of activities will be required to ensure that all people have the opportunity to achieve and maintain sound reproductive health and to exercise their basic right to safe and voluntary fertility regulation. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of adolescents for safe contraceptives designed specifically for their use.

We accordingly stress the urgent need for the expansion of reproductive choice by developing new and improved methods of fertility regulation which are safe, effective and respond to the needs and concerns of the users including adolescents.

HEALTH AND MORTALITY

Crude mortality rates in Caribbean countries, with few exceptions, are similar to those in developed countries. The most frequent causes of death are due to diseases caused by unhealthy life styles.

Maternal mortality rates in the Caribbean continue to be higher than those in developed countries and morbidity as a result of childbirth is a significant cause of ill-health in the women of the subregion.

Specifically, we commit ourselves to achieve a rapid and substantial reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality, by:

- taking the necessary steps to provide family planning knowledge and services to all men and women with the goal of improving the contraceptive prevalence rate;

- reducing the incidence of pregnancies among adolescents and older women, and by educating both men and women on the advantages of spacing births and limiting the number of births;

- providing all pregnant mothers with comprehensive antenatal and post-natal care; and

- providing adequate care by trained personnel at delivery, and, in the event of complications, by ensuring that appropriate referral services are accessible.

We recognize that infant and child mortality rates are declining but there are some countries where preventable infant and childhood deaths are still at unacceptable levels. In particular, the high number of deaths due to accidents: ingestion of toxic substances, falls, traffic accidents, and violence, is cause for action including legislation to improve safety precautions for the protection of children.

We confirm the commitments made at the World Summit for Children which were re-emphasized by the goals and targets set by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

These mortality reduction targets require clear and attainable health goals, a number of which we identify:

- To continue the commitment to immunization, control of diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections;

- To encourage and assist women to breast-feed their infants in the interests of both the mother and the child;

- To reduce the incidence of low birth-weight babies by providing adequate attention to maternal nutrition and infectious diseases;

- To prevent and treat STDs, with special reference to AIDS prevention;

- To take adequate measures to prevent and to treat diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases which are becoming increasingly prominent with changes in life styles; and

- To encourage governments to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We note that early, late, frequent and multiple pregnancies intensify the risks of infant and child mortality and the adverse effects of undernutrition and anaemia of pregnant women resulting in low birth weight. We urge the continued promotion of comprehensive mother and child health services at primary health care levels including the provision of appropriate nutritional supplements and greater advocacy of complete breast-feeding of all infants up to four to six months.

Noting the continuing high incidence of STDs in the Caribbean and the association between HIV infection and that of STDs, and the fact that women can be infected with certain STDs and have no early symptoms and signs of disease, we urge

- the promotion of safe and responsible sex and strengthening of programmes on health education about STDs and HIV for adults as well as adolescents;

- that comprehensive reproductive health services become part of all primary health care services including provision for the early diagnosis and screening of STDs and the distribution of condoms;

- that family planning clinics provide counselling about STDs and make diagnostic tests for STDs available to family planning clients.

We reaffirm our support for the Health For All initiative achieved through the strategy of primary health care as well as the strengthening of health services at district levels and increased community participation.

We support the commitment made by Caribbean Health Ministers to achieve improved access to primary health care facilities with increased attention to the promotion of health and prevention of ill health and recognition of the special needs of vulnerable groups, such as the very young, the elderly and the disabled.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, URBANIZATION AND INTERNAL MIGRATION

Population distribution, Urbanization, Internal Migration and Development

We acknowledge that migration and urbanization are intrinsic parts of the development process. While the subregion is currently characterized by low levels of urbanization, some countries are experiencing high rates of urban growth. In addition, although focus is currently being placed on rural-urban flows, we note in urban areas of some countries, environmental strains, pressures on existing infrastructure and the topography of most of the small island States are prompting people to move out of the urban areas, thereby introducing a reversal in flows.

We therefore reaffirm the need to foster a more balanced population distribution by promoting simultaneously the sustainable development of rural and urban areas, while ensuring compatibility with other government policies.

We agree that these policies should promote strategies which encourage the growth of small urban centres, as well as sustainable development of rural areas, mindful of the need to reduce the risks of environmental degradation through strategies appropriate to the fragile eco-systems of small island States and low-lying coastal countries.

In recognizing the significance of internal migration and population redistribution, and accepting its inevitability, we acknowledge the importance of addressing the causes and identifying the motivation behind such demographic changes, as well as its impact on areas of origin and of destination. We also emphasize the need to address the issues of rural development, equity and food security. We agree that increased attention and resources should be directed towards rectifying shortcomings in rural services which are often the principal motivation for the rural exodus.

We also acknowledge that additional data on population distribution, migration within our countries and territories and intraregional migration will be an important factor in achieving a clearer understanding of migration trends and the impacts of population redistribution.

Border security

We note the problems of mainland coastal countries, with massive land space relative to population size, and their efforts to secure the integrity of their extensive multiple borders, especially, given their inadequate human and other resources. We also note the difficulties involved in seeking to develop policies which promote the movement of the population from the coast-lands to the hinterland and border areas and seek to guarantee the security of their people.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Voluntary international migration is a rational response of individuals to the real or perceived economic, social and political differences between countries. However, in the case of the Caribbean subregion, emigration has been affected not only through migration policies of receiving countries, including the relaxation of migration laws, but also through the active recruitment of skilled labour by developed countries, particularly in the teaching and health professions.

We recognize both the advantages and disadvantages to countries in the subregion of international migration.

Given the small size and/or small populations of Caribbean islands, and coastal countries, their vulnerability to external economic forces and the resultant fragility of the age/sex structure of the population, international migration has a unique impact. Migration affects the critical mass required to accelerate the development process. It also has implications for the carrying capacity of the islands and the development of the mainland coastal countries with their large masses of undeveloped land space and small population size.

In many Caribbean countries, emigration accounts for more than half of the national increase, thus producing low or even negative population growth rates.

We, however, also recognize the importance of remittances and other resource transfers as a consequence of migration.

We also note the effect of heavy immigration on the very small population size of some islands which exerts an extraordinary rippling effect on the demographic age/sex structure and produces some negative consequences on their social, political and ethnic structures. This is especially so where the size of the foreign population group is growing at a faster rate than the "belongers" group. (British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos, United States Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, the Netherlands Antilles).

Concern is not purely demographic in nature but is also based on the economic and political aspects of illegal immigration. Attempts at controlling immigration has taken the form of the "police approach" i.e., the deportation of illegal immigrants. There is a concern that the presence of large numbers of illegal immigrants has created special unexpected demands on the economic, health, education and welfare agencies of the country, a demand that is becoming increasingly difficult to meet satisfactorily.

As human beings, these illegals do have rights, but as illegal immigrants they are often discriminated against and exploited. Clearly from the point of view of both the receiving and sending countries this situation must be regularized.

Mindful that international migration affects and is affected by the development process, and conscious of the need to promote peace, democracy and human rights, we support the need for:

- establishment of programmes designed to favour the retention or the return and reinsertion of qualified human resources into the labour market, to encourage the transfer and use of their knowledge and technology needed by the sending countries for their development;

- international bodies to recognize the need for and give support to ongoing activities related to the measurement and analysis of the impact of these international movements on demographic, social and economic changes. This would facilitate improved planning of programmes to meet basic needs and enhance the quality of life of the population; and

- close collaboration between the receiving and sending countries to formulate strategies to meet the human resource needs of both countries.

Undocumented migrants

We note that there exists a massive exodus of people from Haiti. We acknowledge the importance of achieving a deeper understanding of the causes of this movement and recommend the conduct of more research in this area. We also acknowledge that the international community may have a responsibility to assist in the identification of the underlying causes as well as in the provision of solutions which recognize the basic human rights and vulnerabilities of these migrants, especially women and children.

INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC)

The effective implementation of population and sustainable development policies and programmes, is in large part dependent on systematically planned and implemented IEC programmes.

We therefore recognize the need for communication support to be infused in all of the population and development programmes.

We also strongly urge that a new perspective in IEC emerge which strengthens traditions in population education but which moves to a more structured, systematic and integrated use of communication media, messages and technology.

To ensure the effectiveness of national action, we encourage the adoption of an "integrated marketing communication" approach which allows for systematic planned use of techniques ranging from adult education, public advocacy and public relations to counselling, promotion, marketing and advertising, working from a solid "market" research base with clearly established goals.

We agree that attitudes form the basis for behaviour and that views on population issues are formed long before adulthood. We, therefore, endorse the strengthening of high quality population education and the related fields of family life and sex education in the school systems of the Caribbean to promote, through education and information, a wide awareness of the nature, causes and consequences of demographic trends, population and environment issues, individual and family responsibility related to the consequences of macroeconomic planning.

We reaffirm the need for direct and concerted societal action and, to this end, special training should be provided to develop a new cadre of IEC professionals.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Limited human, technical and financial resources is a fundamental constraint to the integration of population and development in social and economic programming in the Caribbean countries. This may also be compounded by inappropriate institutional and financial arrangements.

This is reflected in the relative lack of quality and timely statistics which limits the capacity to effectively forecast education, health services needs and the future demand for employment. It is also indicated in the difficulties experienced by many countries in adequately addressing population and sustainable development needs.

Also, the limited knowledge on population and development interrelations inhibits effective social and economic policy and programmatic responses to population problems. Without such information and knowledge, the integration of population considerations into development planning is hampered.

Thus we recommend that efforts continue in the provision of national and regional training programmes to:

- strengthen capacity of national planners for population policy formulation, implementation, assessment and monitoring;

- ensure that more research on economic, social and demographic interaction is undertaken;

- improve demographic data collection to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of population processes;

- provide more timely analysis and dissemination of socio-demographic data; and

- promote cooperation and collaboration with NGOs.

We recognize that there is an urgent need for decision makers to address population, economic and social concerns in a systematic and integrated way. The preparation of national population plans and policies, both short and longer-term, is an important step. These should include issues of education and training; human, physical and financial resource requirements; legislation; and the essential and appropriate administrative infrastructure for effective decision-making.

We recommend that the integration of population and environmental issues into planning should become an integral part of development planning in the subregion. To assist planners to undertake such new responsibilities, appropriate training needs to be provided to meet individual country needs. In this regard, we would encourage closer collaboration between the subregion's research institutions and the national, regional and international organizations to facilitate this goal.

Mindful of the important changes that have been taking place in the role of public policy, planning strategies and population and development methodology, we would encourage the modification of existing training curricula to include those new skills and methodologies useful for the new policy tasks.

TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Basic data collection and analysis

Mindful that a greater understanding of social and behavioural processes is essential in order to achieve many of the goals of population and development programmes, we urge that action be taken to promote research essential to the design, implementation and monitoring of population policies and programmes, in order to ensure, inter alia, that they respond to the society at large, and, in particular, the vulnerable groups.

We also note that, to further integrate population policy into development plans and programmes, information must be more readily available and knowledge of the relationships between demographic and socio-economic variables must be enhanced. It is essential to establish electronic information bases, data collection procedures and analytical frameworks

that take into account current development strategies for formulating and implementing population programmes. Accordingly, we urge that action be taken to foster closer interaction between policy makers, government technical staff, statisticians, researchers and NGOs.

Demographic research and population studies have been, with very few exceptions, dependent on the availability of supplementary financial resources, which have almost always come from extraregional sources, or an extension of international research programmes. Notwithstanding the continuation of current funding arrangements, governmental, non-governmental and private institutions should embark upon coordinated regional and subregional efforts to expand and deepen population research as a means of providing additional knowledge geared to a better understanding of key aspects and relationships between population variables, socio-economic and cultural forces, the environment and poverty.

We acknowledge with appreciation the important improvements made in the collection and analysis of data. However, we note that there still remains a paucity of reliable data on international migration. As a result, we urge that the appropriate mechanisms be put in place to ensure a more reliable coverage of international migratory movements in the Caribbean. This would strengthen confidence in the preparation of population estimates and projections.

We also recognize the need for more efficient systems to be set up to improve the coverage and accuracy of recording vital events, in particular, births and deaths, by regional statistical agencies.

We also recognize the need to develop and strengthen the capabilities for conducting efficient social and demographic surveys to better inform the development planning process.

Social and economic research and development

Mindful of the complexity of population and development interactions and the need for formulating integrative public policy, we welcome the opportunity to reaffirm the need for the conduct of interdisciplinary policy analyses which show explicitly the interactions between population growth, composition, distribution and socio-economic and environmental variables. These analyses can be used to explore the relative merits of differing socio-economic policy and programme packages which seek either to accommodate or to influence demographic changes.

We agree that these analyses should also assess specific population consequences of alternative fiscal, wage or pricing policies. We recognize that these analyses could also help decision makers review alternative population, health and educational service delivery packages, programme the timing and spatial distribution of services and investments, assess

the consequences of alternative programme packages for vulnerable or at-risk groups, and evaluate the budgetary implications of alternative combinations of population and service growth.

We also support the need to plan and carry out a variety of policy-relevant analyses and research in support of public policy formulation and the integration of population in development strategies. We would emphasize that key policy studies include, inter alia, analyses for policy formulation, projecting costs and benefits, forecasting appropriate time frames, assessment of implications of population and development programme impacts, and translating policies into operational programmes.

Biomedical research

Recognizing the need to continue to provide new and improved methods of fertility regulation that are safe, effective and appropriate for use at different stages of the reproductive life cycles, we commend recent efforts to encourage reproductive health research in the Caribbean subregion.

We urge governments to seek to strengthen capability to undertake research in reproductive health in the Caribbean subregion in order to solve the reproductive health problems of the subregion.

Noting that countries and territories should identify their essential research needs in reproductive health and formulate national research plans and seek technical assistance in their implementation, we would encourage women's rights and perspectives be incorporated into all stages of the research process.

We note that it is necessary to ensure that research within the subregion conforms to international standards of ethics and ethical practices in clinical research and research, including humans or animals.

We recommend that the development of acceptable barrier methods of fertility regulation which offer protection against infection of HIV and STDs is a matter of urgency; that antibacterial drugs and visacides which offer protection against HIV and STDs but do not prevent pregnancy are also required; and that technology developed as a result of research be adapted and transferred to national programmes without delay.

We reaffirm that priority be given to research on reproductive tract infections (including STDs) and the quality and coverage of antenatal, post-partum and perinatal care.

Social and behavioural research

Taking into consideration the findings of the meeting of regional social, medical and demographic scientists held in Barbados in 1992, and aware of the failure to increase contraceptive prevalence in the subregion, we endorse the priority given to research projects on:

- determinants and dynamics of contraceptive use in the context of stagnating prevalence;
- adolescent reproductive health, including menarche, sexuality, contraceptive use and socialization process;
- blockage between knowledge of STDs and reproductive behaviour.

NATIONAL ACTION

National policies and plans of action

We reaffirm the primacy of action at the national level in population, economic growth and sustainable development activities, while recognizing the significant contribution of regional collaboration and international cooperation.

We note with appreciation the successful achievements of many Caribbean governments in the design, implementation and evaluation of national population policies and programmes. The experience of the past decades suggests that the mobilization of sustained political commitment, at the highest political level and at the level of local leaders of the public, private, non-governmental sectors, as well as at the grass-roots level, has been an important factor behind the success of many of the strong national population programmes. Other factors found to affect the level of effectiveness of population policy formulation and implementation have been data constraints; inadequate workable methodology; insufficiently trained personnel; and inappropriate institutional mechanisms. Also in some countries, clarifying the mode of interaction between the National Population Units, Councils and other bodies responsible for coordinating population policies and programmes, and the sectoral ministries and other concerned parties, still remains a problem to be overcome.

Mindful of the fact that successful population policy implementation and the integration of population into national and regional planning depends upon strong government planning organizations and effective institutional mechanisms for linking population to the planning process, we recommend that national capacities for population

policy implementation be strengthened, through all appropriate means, in particular, through the use of population and development support communication programmes targeted at planners and policy makers as well as the political directorate and NGOs.

We also strongly support the need to:

- strengthen capabilities for integrating population into development planning;
- increase the number of persons trained in areas related to population policy formulation and implementation;
- strengthen existing institutional mechanisms and, where appropriate, establish population units and councils as an essential population policy implementation management tool;
- establish stronger linkages and strengthen coordination among the population, social and economic sectors to harmonize sector goals and policies.

We also urge the exploration of innovative methods of raising awareness among political leaders, planners and policy makers of the interrelationships between population and development and the need to incorporate population issues in social and economic programmes.

We note that national action requires, in the first instance, the formulation of comprehensive population and development policies and the design of integrated plans and programmes of action to address the complex but interrelated issues of population and sustainable development. We accordingly urge governments to make firm commitments to the achievement of integrated population and development policies and programmes.

To ensure the effectiveness of national action, we encourage adoption of an integrated programmatic approach that would promote close linkages between project activities, sectoral programmes and national policies. This should be facilitated by the establishment of national and local planning coordinative mechanisms and the mobilization of various institutional and social groupings to ensure sustained action.

We also acknowledge that an important consideration for direct and concerted societal action is the establishment of clear, short and long-term national goals for population, economic growth and sustainable development, especially in the areas of human resources development and the availability and access to MCH/FP services.

Mindful of the fact that many of the countries are experiencing recessionary trends in their domestic activities, we still recommit ourselves to intensifying national efforts to generate domestic resources to support all categories of population and development activities.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The development of national and regional programmes to promote population and sustainable development will require the continued provision of external technical and financial assistance for the foreseeable future. In this regard we recognize the vital role of regional collaboration and international cooperation.

Attention is given to the need for international development agencies, donor organizations and partner countries to act in a coordinated manner to guarantee consistency and continuity of support to programmes and to promote the attainment of policies and goals of the countries and territories of the subregion. In this regard we note with appreciation the efforts of all international agencies and donor organizations and encourage them to continue to cooperate with relevant regional organizations in full conformity with the wishes of the countries of the subregion in coordinating population assistance within the overall context of sustainable development activities.

We particularly stress the need for continued full and close cooperation between regional organizations where issues of a cross-sectional and interrelated nature such as population and development are concerned.

We welcome additional support for population-related programmes from the donor community and view this as timely recognition of the central place of population concerns within sustainable development.

We note the tendency for donors to view the improved demographic situation and relatively high GNP of the subregion as an indication that basic quality of life conditions are met and that therefore, there is less need for continuing support. We therefore urge that action be taken to revise the guidelines/recommendations for assistance levels on the basis of updated estimates for resource requirements consistent with the scale of efforts needed to achieve the national quantitative goals, taking into consideration the constraints created by economic changes and structural adjustment programmes.

We also urge the international community to recognize that the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with their limited human resource and planning capacities may require recourse to special technical support from subregional or regional agencies to complement national resources dedicated to the formulation of population and development strategies and that meeting these special needs should not replace, but be in addition to the assistance given to priority countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs).

PARTNERSHIPS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS INCLUDING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

We recognize the important contribution made by the non-governmental organizations, the private sector and local community organizations to the improvement of the quality of life within the countries and territories of this region.

We agree that close cooperation between governments, the non-governmental and private sectors needs to be further encouraged so that they can fully participate in population activities. Non-governmental organizations should participate in local, regional and international decision-making bodies, including the United Nations systems, to ensure effective follow-up and implementation of the Cairo agreement.

We reaffirm the need to enhance the partnership between governments, non-governmental organizations including women's groups, the private sector and local communities and would encourage them to fully participate in the conceptualization, innovation, implementation and evaluation of population and development programmes and policies.

We therefore recommend that governments and international agencies create suitable mechanisms and frameworks to enhance the role of NGOs in the field of population. However, NGOs must become equal partners in defining and structuring population policies, programmes and services.

We also urge that adequate resource allocation be provided for NGOs so that they can ensure a strengthening of their management capabilities in order to deliver the high quality services required to meet the growing needs of the subregion.

PREPARATIONS FOR AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONFERENCE

We agree that, while full and active involvement in preparations for the Cairo Conference and high level attendance at it would be most important for the countries and territories of the subregion, the real significance of Caribbean efforts in the area of population and sustainable development lies in the actions set in motion to follow the 1994 International Conference on Population and Sustainable Development.

We therefore agree that throughout the remainder of the preparatory process for the 1994 Conference the countries and territories of the subregion, together with regional organizations and institutions, continue to cooperate and collaborate to ensure the most effective recognition of those aspects of the Conference's mandate of direct relevance to the subregion.

We call on ECLAC, CARICOM, PAHO, WAND, UWI and other relevant regional institutions to continue to work closely and collaboratively on all aspects of population and sustainable development. In order to ensure that a specific regional agency undertakes the role of coordination, we call on the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat to continue this role, including during the lead-up and follow-up to the Cairo Conference, in close collaboration with other relevant regional organizations.

We acknowledge the assistance provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other international and regional organizations and donors, and urge their continued involvement in population and sustainable development activities.

In adopting this Declaration at Port-of-Spain on 3 December 1993, we, the representatives of the Caribbean subregion, commit ourselves and our countries to seek to ensure its immediate and ongoing implementation.